

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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OMB-01 SAM-01 /059 W

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R 100305Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3121

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 3172

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VN, ID, ASEAN

SUBJECT: INDONESIAN REACTION TO HANOI ATTACKS ON
ASEAN

REF: A. SINGAPORE 0986; B. MANILA 3057, C. JAKARTA 3025 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: HANOI ATTACKS ON ASEAN HAVE DRAWN BOTH
REMARKABLE INDONESIAN EDITORIAL COMMENT AS WELL AS
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REACTIONS FROM GOI LEADERS. MOST
COMMENTARY STRESSES ASEAN NON-HOSTILITY TOWARD COMMUNIST
INDONCHINA STATES, AND SOME NATIONALIST ELEMENTS ATTEMPT
EXPLAIN AWAY HANOI HOSTILITY, BUT TENOR OF AUTHORITA-
TIVE GOI REACTION IS ONE OF CONCERN OVER HANOI MILITANCY
IN FACE OF PROFFERED ASEAN OLIVE BRANCH. PRESIDENT
SUHARTO IN MEETING WITH VISITING CANADIAN MINISTER DIS-
PLAYED BARELY RESTRAINED ANGER WHEN ASKED ABOUT HANOI
BROADCASTS, IN WHAT INDONESIAN MINISTER PRESENT AT MEETING
DESCRIBED AS RARE "OUTBURST" OF EMOTION. WITH LITTLE
ABILITY TO DIRECTLY INFLUENCE HANOI'S ATTITUDES, GOI WILL
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NOW LIKELY LET SUBJECT DROP AND HOPE HANOI MODERATES ITS

STAND OVER TIME. INDONESIA'S ASEAN BRETHREN, HOWEVER, CAN EXPECT TO HEAR THINLY-VEILED "I TOLD YOU SO'S" ON SUBJECT IN FUTURE ASEAN SECURITY DISCUSSIONS. END SUMMARY.

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1. HOSTILE STATEMENTS ABOUT ASEAN EMANATING FROM HANOI DURING PERIOD OF ASEAN SUMMIT ELICITED WIDESPREAD REACTION FROM INDONESIAN PRESS WHICH USUALLY MORE TACITURN IN COMMENTING ON SENSITIVE POLITICAL/SECURITY SUBJECTS. TYPICAL EDITORIAL COMMENT IS DESCRIPTION OF HANOI STATEMENTS AS "UNREASONABLE, ILLOGICAL,...AND UNFRIENDLY" BY LEADING EVENING DAILY SINAR HARAPAN (REF C). MILITARY-CONNECTED BERITA BUANA USED EVEN STRONGER LANGUAGE TO EXPRESS DISAGREEMENT WITH "MEEK REACTION" OF THOSE CALLING FOR "UNDERSTANDING" OF HANOI'S SUPPORT FOR SUBVERSION IN NON-COMMUNIST SEA STATES. ONLY RADICAL NATIONALIST DAILY MERDEKA ATTEMPTED TO APOLOGIZE FOR HANOI STATEMENT ON GROUNDS OF INDOCHINA'S BITTER EXPERIENCE AND NEGATIVE VIEW OF ANYTHING CONNECTED WITH U.S. AND WEST; MERDEKA CALLED FOR UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENCE ON PART OF ASEAN STATES IN PRECISELY SAME TERMS AS CRITICIZED BY BERITA BUANA. ALL PRESS COMMENTARY, HOWEVER, UNIFORMLY PRAISES ASEAN ATTITUDE OF NON-HOSTILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH INDOCHINA STATES.

2. OFFICIAL PUBLIC REACTION BY GOI LEADERS SOMEWHAT MORE MUTED THAN EDITORIAL REACTION BUT NEVERTHELESS GENERALLY NEGATIVE. FONMIN MALIK IN EXCHANGE WITH REPORTERS MARCH 1 DESCRIBED HANOI STATEMENT ON NEW CONFRONTATION IN SEA AS AN "EXPERIMENTAL TACTIC" PERHAPS MOTIVATED BY DESIRE TO SEE U.S. TROOPS WITHDRAWN FROM THAILAND. PARLIAMENT FOREIGN AFFAIRS/DEFENSE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN IMRON ROSJADI MARCH 2 PRAISED GOS FONMIN RAJARATNAM WARNING TO INDOCHINESE COMMUNISTS AGAINST INTERFERENCE IN ASEAN AFFAIRS (SINGAPORE 0975), AGREED WITH RAJARATNAM ANALYSIS OF HANOI STATEMENT AS SIGNALLING INCREASE IN SUBVERSION AGAINST NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND CALLED FOR GREATER ASEAN VIGILANCE. ROSJADI ALSO OPINED HANOI THREATS AIMED AT EXTORTING AID FROM U.S. ONLY GOI OFFICIAL TO EXCUSE HANOI STATEMENT WAS FORMER INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR TO HANOI AND NATIONALIST POLITICIAN USEP RANUWIDJAJA WHO TOLD PRESS MARCH 6 THAT STATEMENTS REPRESENTED ONLY VIEWS OF NORTH VIETNAMESE PRESS, NOT DRV GOVERNMENT WHICH HARBORED NO AGGRESSIVE DESIGNS ON NEIGHBORS DESPITE CONCERN OVER U.S. BASES AND FORMER

GVN MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES SUCH AS THAILAND. REPORTERS GAVE USEP UNUSUALLY HARD TIME, PRESSING HIM ON CONNECTION BETWEEN HANOI MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT AND FORCING HIM TO PLEAD LAMELY IGNORANCE OF THESE "TECHNICAL" MATTERS. (FONOFF ASIA/PACIFIC DIRECTOR TOLD POLCOUNS USEP STATEMENT DEFINITELY DID NOT REFLECT GOI VIEW.) END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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3. PRIVATE REACTION OF PRESIDENT SUHARTO TO HANOI STATEMENTS REPORTED CONSIDERABLY STRONGER THAN PUBLIC OFFICIAL COMMENTS. DURING MARCH 3 CALL, VISITING CANADIAN TRADE MINISTER RAISED SUBJECT, AT WHICH SUHARTO, ACCORDING CANADIAN AMBASSADOR, "PRACTICALLY POUNDED ON THE TABLE" WHILE SAYING WITH CONSIDERABLE STRESS THAT STATEMENTS PROVED TRUTH OF WHAT GOI HAD BEEN SAYING FOR SOME TIME CONCERNING HANOI'S SUBVERSIVE DESIGNS ON SEA REGION. IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER QUESTION SUHARTO, WHO APPEARED WELL BRIEFED ON HANOI BROADCASTS, SAID IT NATURAL TO EXPECT HANOI TO MANEUVER TO MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE OF BOTH MOSCOW AND PEKING, BUT THIS NOT NECESSARILY INCONSISTENT WITH HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ITS NON-COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT SUHARTO'S "ANGER" CONVEYED IN RESTRAINED JAVANESE MANNER, BUT SAID HIS OWN ASSESSMENT HAD BEEN CONFIRMED BY INDONESIAN TRADE MINISTER WHO ALSO ATTENDED MEETING AND REFERRED AFTERWARDS TO SUHARTO'S "OUTBURST" ON HANOI.

4. COMMENT: PUBLIC GOI COMMENTARY ON NEW EVIDENCE OF HANOI HOSTILITY TO NON-COMMUNIST SEA COUNTRIES AND ASEAN LIKELY TO REMAIN MUTED IN ABSENCE OF CONCRETE HANOI ACTIONS AND, FOLLOWING INITIAL FLURRY OF REACTIONS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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IMMEDIATE WAKE OF ASEAN SUMMIT GOI WILL PROBABLY LET SUBJECT LARGELY DROP. THIS REFLECTS BASIC FACT THAT GOI HAS LITTLE ABILITY TO INFLUENCE HANOI ATTITUDES AND CAN ONLY ATTEMPT TO LIVE WITH HANOI, HOPING THAT OVER TIME HANOI WILL DECIDE ITS INTERESTS BEST SERVED BY NON-CONFRONTATIONAL APPROACH TO ITS NEIGHBORS. NEVERTHELESS, HANOI SALVOS AT ASEAN CAN ALSO BE EXPECTED TO REDOUBLE INDONESIAN CONVICTION THAT STRONG SECURITY POSTURE ESSENTIAL FOR ASEAN STATES AND THAT AT MINIMUM SECURITY CONSULTATIONS ARE NECESSARY COUNTERPART TO ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION. HAVING POSTULATED HANOI INTRANSIGENCE AND MILITANCY VIS-A-VIS NON-COMMUNIST SEA EVER SINCE FALL OF VIETNAM, BUT HAVING FAILED DURING RUN-UP TO SUMMIT TO ELICIT COMMITMENT FROM ALL ASEAN MEMBERS TO TAKE MUTUAL ACTION AIMED AT COUNTERING THIS

THREAT, GOI PROBABLY BELIEVES HANOI IS NOW TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ASEAN TIMIDITY TO THUMB ITS NOSE AT ORGANIZATION. INDONESIA'S MORE RELUCTANT ASEAN BRETHREN CAN PROBABLY EXPECT TO HEAR STRAINS OF "I TOLD YOU SO" FROM GOI REPS IN NEXT GATHERINGS WHERE POLITICAL/SECURITY TOPICS ARE ON THE AGENDA.
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